Federal agents shoot and kill another person in Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS: Federal immigration agents shot dead a man in Minneapolis on Saturday, officials said — the second fatal shooting of a civilian in the city, sparking fresh protests and outrage from state officials.

The death came less than three weeks after US citizen Renee Good was shot and killed by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer involved in sweeps to round up undocumented migrants.

The Department of Homeland Security insisted its officers acted in self-defense while seeking "an illegal alien wanted for violent assault" in a "targeted operation." But Minnesota Governor Tim Walz called the shooting "horrific" and demanded that state authorities lead the investigation.

A video circulating on social media — and later confirmed by authorities — show several agents, including at least one wearing a vest marked "POLICE," surrounding a person on the ground and hitting him multiple times. Several gunshots are heard.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey pulled no punches, urging President Donald Trump to end the federal immigration operation, which has sparked sometimes violent demonstrations.

"This is a moment to act like a leader. Put Minneapolis, put America first in this moment — let's achieve peace. Let's end this operation." Police chief Brian O'Hara said an "incredibly volatile scene" had erupted after the shooting and urged residents to avoid the area.

Officers who declared the protest an unlawful assembly deployed clouds of tear gas as the crowd grew and used dumpsters to make blockades on the road in the busy south Minneapolis neighborhood known for its restaurants.—AFP

MINNEAPOLIS (Minnesota, US): Demonstrators participate in a rally and march during an 'ICE Out' day of protest. Community leaders, faith leaders and labour unions have urged Minnesotans to participate in what they are calling a 'day of action' as local businesses are expected to close during a statewide general strike held in protest against immigration enforcement operations in the region.—AFP

US strike on alleged drug-smuggling boat kills two in Pacific

WASHINGTON: The US military said it killed two alleged drug traffickers in a strike on a boat in the eastern Pacific on Friday, while the Coast Guard was searching for a third person who survived.

"Intelligence confirmed the vessel was transiting along known narco-trafficking routes in the Eastern Pacific and was engaged in narco-trafficking operations," the US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) said in a post on X that included a clip of a multi-engined boat being smashed by an explosion.

Three people were visible in the footage prior to the strike, and SOUTHCOM said it "immediately" notified the US Coast Guard to look for the one who survived. President Donald Trump's administration began targeting alleged smuggling boats in early September, insisting it is effectively at war with alleged "narco-terrorists" operating out of Venezuela. But it has provided no definitive evidence that the vessels are involved in drug trafficking, prompting heated debate about the legality of the operations.—AFP

Europe, India seek closer ties with 'mother of all deals'

BRUSSELS: India and Europe hope to strike the "mother of all deals" when EU chiefs meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi next week, as the two economic behemoths seek to forge closer ties.

Facing challenges from China and the United States, India and the European Union have been negotiating a massive free trade pact — and talks, first launched about two decades ago, are nearing the finishing line.

"We are on the cusp of a historic trade agreement," European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said this week. Von der Leyen and European Council president Antonio Costa will attend Republic Day celebrations on Monday before an EU-India summit on Tuesday, where they hope to shake hands on the accord.

Securing a pact described by India's Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal as "the mother of all deals", would be a major win for Brussels and New Delhi as both seek to open up new markets in the face of US tariffs and Chinese export controls. But officials have been eager to stress there is more to it than commerce.

"The EU and India are moving closer together at the time when the rules-based international order is under unprecedented pressure through wars, coercion and economic fragmentation," the EU's top diplomat, Kaja Kallas said.

'Untapped potential'

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and US President Donald Trump's punitive tariffs have brought momentum to the relationship between India and the EU, said Praveen Donthi, of the International Crisis Group think tank.

"The EU eyes the Indian market and aims to steer a rising power like India away from Russia, while India seeks to diversify its partnerships, doubling down on its strategy of multi-alignment at a time when its relations with the US have taken a downward turn," he said.

The summit will offer Brussels the chance to turn the page after a bruising transatlantic crisis over Greenland — now seemingly defused. Together the EU and India account for about a quarter of the world's population and GDP.

Bilateral trade in goods reached 120 billion euros ($139 billion) in 2024, an increase of nearly 90 per cent over the past decade, according to EU figures, with a further 60 billion euros ($69 billion) in trade in services. But both parties are eager to do more.

"India still accounts for around only around 2.5pc of total EU trade in goods, compared with close to 15pc for China," an EU official said, adding the figure gave a sense of the "untapped potential" an agreement could unlock.

EU makers of cars, machinery and chemicals have much to gain from India lowering entry barriers, said Ignacio Garcia Bercero, an analyst at Brussels think tank Bruegel, who led EU trade talks with New Delhi over a decade ago.

"India is one of the most heavily protected economies in the world, with very, very high tariffs, including on many products where the European Union has a competitive advantage," he said.—AFP

Pentagon foresees 'more limited' role in deterring North Korea

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon foresees a "more limited" role in deterring North Korea, with South Korea taking primary responsibility for the task, according to a policy document released on Friday, a move that could lead to a reduction of US forces on the Korean Peninsula.

South Korea hosts about 28,500 US troops in combined defence against North Korea's military threat and Seoul has raised its defense budget by 7.5pc for this year.

"South Korea is capable of taking primary responsibility for deterring North Korea with critical but more limited US support," the Pentagon said in the 25-page National Defence Strategy document that guides its policies.

"This shift in the balance of responsibility is consistent with America's interest in updating US force posture on the Korean Peninsula." In recent years, US officials have signaled a desire to make US forces in South Korea more flexible, to potentially operate outside the Korean Peninsula in response to a broader range of threats, such as in defending Taiwan and checking China's growing military reach.

South Korea has resisted the idea of shifting the role of US troops, but has worked to grow its defence capabilities in the past 20 years, with the goal of being able to take on the wartime command of combined US and South Korean forces. South Korea has 450,000 troops.

The Pentagon's top policy official, Elbridge Colby, is due to travel to Asia next week and is expected to visit South Korea, a US official said.

The wide-ranging document, which each new administration publishes, said the Pentagon's priority was defending the homeland. In the Indo-Pacific region, the document said, the Pentagon was focused on ensuring that China could not dominate the United States or US allies.—Reuters

Boy dies after shark attack in Sydney Harbour

SYDNEY: A 12-year-old boy bitten by a shark in Sydney Harbour has died of his injuries, his family said on Saturday.

Nico Antic's parents said their son died of the injuries suffered when a large shark attacked him last week as he and his friends were jumping into the water.

"We are heartbroken to share that our son, Nico, has passed away," Lorena and Juan Antic said in a statement.

At the time of the attack, the children were leaping into the water off a six-metre (20-foot) rock in the eastern Sydney suburb of Vaucluse.

Recent heavy rain had drained into the harbour, turning the water murky, police said.

Antic was suffering from heavy bleeding when he was pulled into a police boat and taken to hospital in critical condition.

"Nico was a happy, friendly, and sporty young boy with the most kind and generous spirit. He was always full of life and that's how we'll remember him," his parents said.—AFP

Greenland, Denmark set aside troubled history to face down Trump

COPENHAGEN: Greenland and Denmark have formed a united front to face down US President Donald Trump, momentarily setting aside the troubled history between them.

The Arctic island, a Danish colony for three centuries, still has a complicated relationship with Denmark, which now rules it as an autonomous territory. Greenland's main political parties all want independence, but disagree on how exactly to get there. Trump's designs on the island led them to forge a coalition government in March last year.

Greenland's leaders made clear last week they had no interest in Trump's bid to take over the vast island — an idea he pushed hard, before backing off on Wednesday after reaching what he called a framework deal on Arctic security with Nato's secretary-general.

"Greenlanders still have a lot of grievances concerning Denmark's lack of ability to reconsider its colonial past," said Ulrik Pram Gad, a researcher at the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS).

"But Trump's pressure has prompted the wide majority of the political spectrum that forms (Greenland's) coalition government to put independence preparations — always a long-term project — aside for now," he said.

"The clear European support has made this easier in the sense that the relation to Denmark feels a lot less claustrophobic when joined by others," he added. While the main Greenland parties differ on how to achieve independence, the growing US pressure led them in March 2025 to put their differences to one side to form their coalition.

Only the Naleraq party, which wants a fast track to independence, stayed in opposition. At the height of the crisis, Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen made it clear that if the government had to choose between the United States and Denmark, it would choose Denmark.

Colonial past

Trump's talk of a framework deal negotiated with Nato chief Mark Rutte prompted Denmark and Greenland to reiterate that only they can take decisions concerning them. In the last month of diplomatic back-and-forth, Greenland and Denmark have presented a united front, speaking with one voice.

On January 14, Greenland's Foreign Minister Vivian Motzfeldt was in Washington alongside her Danish counterpart Lars Lokke Rasmussen for talks with US Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

By Monday, she was in Brussels for talks with Rutte, this time with Denmark's Defence Minister Troels Lund Poulsen. But that unity conceals the scars of their colonial past.

Greenland was a Danish colony from the early 18th century. It became a Danish territory in 1953, a full part of Denmark — before becoming an autonomous territory in 1979, a status that was strengthened in 2009.

"It's a long history. It has gone through different stages," said Astrid Andersen, a specialist in Danish-Greenlandic relations at the Danish Institute for International Studies. "Any colonial relation is a question of domination and there have been some injustices committed."

Forced sterilisation

Those injustices include a 1951 social experiment in which 22 Inuit children were forcibly separated from their families and prevented from speaking Greenlandic — part of bid to create a Danish-speaking elite. In 2021, the six still alive were each awarded compensation of 250,000 crowns (33,500 euros).

Another dark chapter was Denmark's efforts from the 1960s and for three decades on to reduce the birth rate in Greenland. Several thousand women and teenagers — at least 4,000 — had IUDs fitted without their consent to prevent them conceiving.—AFP

NEWSMAKERS

PERNIK (Bulgaria): People dressed in costumes participate in the International Festival of the Masquerade Games on Saturday.—Reuters

SAINT PETERSBURG: Russian director Konstantin Bronzit, whose animated short film *The Three Sisters* has been nominated for an Oscar, attends an interview at the Melnitsa animation studio.—Reuters

ROYAL Cambodian Navy personnel welcome the US Navy's littoral combat ship for a port call at the Ream Naval base on Saturday.—AFP

US warship makes first call at Cambodia's Chinese-renovated naval base

REAM: A US warship on Saturday made a port call at a Cambodian naval base for the first time since Chinese renovations that have raised concerns in Washington.

The United States has said Ream Naval Base, off Cambodia's southern coast, could give China a key strategic position in the Gulf of Thailand near the disputed South China Sea, which Beijing claims almost in its entirety.

The littoral combat ship USS Cincinnati (LCS-20) docked on Saturday morning at one of the base's piers 150 metres (yards) away from a pair of Chinese warships.

"It is our privilege and our honour to be here as the first US naval vessel to moor pierside at Ream Naval Base, and we hope this is the beginning of a long-standing tradition and friendship," Andrew J. Recame, the ship's commanding officer, told reporters.

Cambodian leaders have repeatedly denied that the base is for use by any single foreign power, following US media reports in 2022 saying the new facilities at Ream — originally built partly with US funds — would be exclusively for the Chinese navy.

Ream base said in a statement that the five-day US visit would "promote cooperation between the two countries", and that it showed Cambodia's "commitment in implementing an open policy, transparent and cooperation with international partners".

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and a delegation from China's People's Liberation Army inaugurated the base in April last year. Hun Manet denied the new and improved facility would be for Beijing's "exclusive" use, saying ships from other countries would be allowed to dock.—AFP

WARSAW: Lithuania's President Gitanas Nauseda (left) and Poland's President Karol Nawrocki (right) shake hands as Diana Nausediene (centre) looks on during ceremonies marking the 163th anniversary of January Uprising — a Polish-led insurrection in 1863–1864 against the Russian Empire on Saturday.—AFP

MAYOR of Lyon Gregory Doucet (left) distributes leaflets and campaigns in the Croix Rousse district of France, ahead of the municipal election on Saturday.—AFP